Cine-Files
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# New Horizons. Editorial

by Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin

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Dina Iordanova:

A lot has changed at St Andrews recently. We began work on the Institute of Global Cinema and Creative Cultures this fall with a plan to launch it in 2015. As its director, I hope to take the study of film festivals and global circulation to new heights. I am looking to ensure that our work is marked by excitement and originality, transnational diversity, and fun.

In the department of Film Studies, we welcome back Lucy Donaldson as Teaching Fellow and look forward to the spring, when Michael Cowan, joins us as Reader. Internationally renowned critic and festival personality Chris Fujiwara was appointed to an Honorary Readership. Finally, a cohort of new doctoral students has arrived to join the extremely active group of knowledgeable and energetic postgraduates. They not only publish this newsletter, but are involved in a host of initiatives including the online journal Frames, the annual PG symposium, and the PhD conference. Within these changing landscapes, the search for a new research identity has begun.

So, after nearly a decade of running the CFS, I felt it was time for me to move on and let someone else take the helm of the Centre. Leshu Torchin, Senior Lecturer in Film, comes in to take on this role, and she brings along a new vision of the Centre’s repertoire and scope. Leshu, perhaps you would like to say a few words here about the new direction in which you would like to take the Centre?
Leshu Torchin:

Thank you, Dina. It’s very exciting, if daunting to take the helm of the Centre, which has flourished under your leadership. These are large shoes to fill and I hope to do the job justice.

The Centre has already started to change, as we said farewell and thank you to two of the Centre's management committee members, Vice Principal (Research) Chris Hawkesworth and Professor Bernard Bentley, both of whom have retired this year. Bernard was a pioneer of Film Studies at the University and of great support to the department. And he contributed to a rich and robust film studies environment with such events as last semester’s symposium with filmmaker Icíar Bollaín. Both Bernard and Chris will be missed.

In happier news, we welcomed Professor Derek Duncan from Italian Studies and Dr Jeffrey Murer from International Relations onto the committee. Their interest in transnational cultures, memory, and politics, not to mention their enthusiasm for film bring exciting collaborative possibilities.

The programme for this year unites the Centre’s longstanding interest in the transnational and cinemas beyond Hollywood with an initiative to introduce students and the community to Film Studies beyond textual and formal analysis. Of course this method provides a valuable (and enjoyable) tool for study, but all too often it’s easy to forget the other approaches that make Film Studies such a dynamic and important discipline. To that end, I was thrilled to have Dina launch the speaker series with a talk on the Chinese Film Festivals outside China. Presentations on state uses of film culture, an institutional history of Iranian cinema, and the “unwar film” promise to be equally thrilling and illuminating, as do visits from filmmakers.

I will continue to look towards other possibilities for the Centre. The aim is to demonstrate the breadth of a field that has come into its own as we explore new forms of engagement beyond the speaker series.
For many film scholars, psychoanalytic film theory was at once a deeply satisfying mode of critical inquiry, a radical form of analysis, and a form of critical orthodoxy that imposed a steep cost in terms of readerly labour expended and rewards gained. I confess to being an early enthusiast: my first three published essays were explicitly psychoanalytic readings, first of *Rome, Open City*, then of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and finally of Godard’s montage practice. Combined with my intensive reading of Christian Metz and others, I was convinced for a longish period, that psychoanalysis would be the critical discourse that would sustain me throughout my career. Thus it was with special pleasure and anticipation that I accepted the lovely invitation of Agnieszka Piotrowska from the University of Bedfordshire to present a paper at the Freud Museum in London, part of the book launch for *Embodied Encounters*, an edited volume she has just published with Routledge. The trip did not disappoint. Seeing “the couch” and the desk in the study – Freud brought all his furniture and figurines to his last residence “on this earth,” as his quote attests – was to experience the aura that we have been told no longer exists. And to hear again concepts such as “jouissance,” the voice as lost object, and more recent considerations of Deleuze and Freud, was to experience a vital intellectual project that, it turns out, has not gone completely underground.

Upwards of fifty people attended this very good symposium; to my surprise, many of the attendees were young creative artists, and many asked questions. Among the speakers, Elizabeth Cowie made an especially strong impression in her discussion of the voice and embodiment, for she herself is one of the signature voices of psychoanalytic film theory, and I found her discussion of Chion and a film by Jill Godmilow on Jerzy Grotowski to be filled with possibility. My own paper, on the film ready-mades of Douglas Gordon and the video artist Cory Arcangel, marked a departure from my usual subjects, and reminded me of how closely entwined our memories of movies – and video games – and our narratives of self can be. All in all, this was a wonderful event, and one that has reawakened my interest in a critical discourse that now seems to have developed along a parallel track in the work of young creative artists.
This year saw the conflict between Israel and Palestine escalate once more, with repeated attacks and raids on Gaza, numerous victims, and media outrage. In the context of a generalised political activism, emerging stronger and stronger all around the globe, it was not long until academics would ask themselves where they stand on the matter, and whether it can all be as black and white as the media usually showcases. In the field of film studies, a first step towards a more complex view on the situation in Palestine was taken during the summer, when the web resource palestinedocs.net was launched.

The collaborative initiative belongs to professors Dina Iordanova from the Department of Film Studies at the University of St Andrews, and Eva Jorholt from the University of Copenhagen. According to the project initiators, the website is primarily meant to facilitate access to a “critical mass” of films that “chronicle the years of basic human rights deprivation and denigration leading to what’s happening in Palestine today.”

These films are not simply brought together as a web listing, but in most cases, links are provided to websites where films can be viewed for free or for a small charge. The fact that these films come from all parts of the world, as well as the promise of contributions from a range of international academics, show, according to the two initiators, that concern over Palestine is “a truly transnational endeavour.”

The statement of purpose published on palestinedocs.net also highlights the importance of the “corrective” role that all these films play. Thus, as far as professor Iordanova is concerned, “unlike media reports where clear-cut actors must feed into a simplified narrative or “warring sides” and news programmes where concern over Palestine wanes as soon as a shaky ceasefire comes about, film can show the complexity of the situation and the human relationships that make up the fabric of every conflict, and document how people’s lives are affected in continuity.”

Ultimately, palestinedocs.net is intended as a resource to be used for teaching and research, and it represents an acutely contemporary, critically engaged (and engaging) endeavour, in terms of studying the Palestine conflict, as well as transnational cinemas.
Lucy Fife Donaldson’s *Texture in Film* is an interesting and innovative reading of sensorial experience in the cinema. The recent publication from Palgrave Macmillan employs a multidisciplinary approach to analysing texture in film. Texture is a quality that has the capacity to generate a sensorial world both within and outside the film. Lucy’s work paves the way for a wider exploration of this aspect of textual analysis of film.

Lucy, your book analyses texture with an approach that goes beyond the realm of pure text. How would you position your book in a progressively expansive and transdisciplinary appreciation of contemporary film culture?

While I am committed to film criticism and a close engagement with the film text, which is clearly very medium-specific, I find that interdisciplinary approaches can be incredibly rewarding. Film culture is never cut off from other influences, so it makes sense to me to explore how film connects beyond itself. Indeed, one of the most exciting things for me on this project was the opportunity to draw on how texture has been conceptualized in other disciplines. My thinking on texture is crucially informed by music, visual art and literary criticism/theory, principally because texture hasn’t been a topic much discussed in Film Studies. My hope for the book, therefore, is for it to demonstrate the benefits of such an approach, by elucidating the connections between these disciplines, and to open up communications. Furthermore, during my work on the book I have been involved in two interdisciplinary events, both at St Andrews, which have really enriched my own thinking on the topic. When I was a Teaching Fellow at St Andrews previously (2012-13) I organized a symposium that featured presentations using a range of disciplinary approaches to texture and ended with an interdisciplinary roundtable (with contributions from History of Art and English, as well as Film Studies). Earlier this year I was delighted to be invited as a keynote for another symposium on textures organized by post-graduates in the School of English, which also featured workshops on creative writing and weaving.
Do you think “textural analysis” could play a key role in defining distinct paradigms based on involuntary reactions in audience response?

In the book’s conclusion I quote from V.F.Perkins: “One must respond to the textures of [Nicholas] Ray’s films before one can understand their meanings. One must appreciate their dynamics before one can see, embodied in their turbulent movement, an ethical and poetic vision of the universe and of man’s place in it.” For me, Perkins is summing up the importance of responsiveness to film form, which is something that should always inform our reading of a film. “Textural analysis,” that is a close attention to the text that aims to explore the rich interrelationship of elements that combine to generate feeling and affect, is, I think, the starting point for unpicking responsiveness. I feel strongly that in order to understand a film (in relation to any angle you are approaching it from) you need to start with the details of its form, to think about and connect with what this is setting up or offering to the viewer. In that sense, I would hope that its contribution would play a key role, as it seems to me to be a foundation in understanding how films move us.

In terms of involuntary reactions, that becomes a slightly trickier question, partly because it broaches more scientific questions of how our brains and bodies work, which can lead to a problematic hierarchy between fact and interpretation, science and art. However, having said that, there are certain ways in which insights into the involuntary responsiveness of the body can be of interest. I’ve written about the effortful impact of performance, in relation to a moment from Rosemary’s Baby (“Effort and Affect: Engaging with Film Performance” in Reason, Matthew & Dee Reynolds (eds), Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2012.), where I sought to draw out the physicalized or embodied relationship between what we see and what we feel, a relationship which is scientifically supported by the putative discovery of the mirror neuron (whereby you have the same neurological response whether you see or do a particular action). In this respect, the science offered a suggestive confirmation or parallel of what I explored through analysis and interpretation of the film, rather than an informing and potentially dominant factual basis that “proved” my claims emerging from the film itself.

In studying certain films, for instance, an original and its culturally/chronologically displaced remake, would there be a perceptible deviation in methodology when employing “textural analysis?”
I don’t think so, though this does raise the question of cultural specificity in relation to texture. This is not something I had room to explore in the book, but I think it would make for a fascinating further study into the affective qualities of film. In fact, this week my teaching brushes up against your question exactly, because I am lecturing on the influence of contemporary Japanese horror, which went through a process of being remade in America (and elsewhere). Our main film under discussion is Ringu (Hideo Nakata, 1998), which means we will look also at the US version. It strikes me that one of the odd things about The Ring (Gore Verbinski, 2002) is that although it transposes some fairly fundamental elements that certainly inform texture, specifically the geographical location, the look of the film seems to be making an effort to remain close to that of the Japanese version, resulting in a rather weird disjunction between feel and place. So, the Japanese film is quite dark – many sequences are underlit – and characterized by a blue/green quality to the light. This seems to capture something about the places in the film, but furthermore connects the general look of the film to the opening images of the sea (the significance of which is explored narratively, but are more pervasive within the general atmosphere or even the tone of the film). The US version replicates the blue/green look, but features neither such a darkened lighting scheme, nor the connection to the sea (the sea does have some narrative significance, but not to the same extent). As a result, this feels like somewhat of a mismatch, or an effort to replicate the feel of the Japanese version which seems to be connected to its cultural specificity, without it coming from within the particularities of the film itself.

*Texture in Film* is an exciting new way to look at films. Tell us about your next project.

Thank you! I’m currently working on ways to extend the work I did for the book, including articles on the television series as a textural experience and the layered qualities of Budd Boetticher’s Ranown films. Thinking further ahead, I’m very interested in taking on the relationship between design and affect through work that combines archival research and interviews with practitioners with criticism – that would be my next big project. I’ve also been working on a star study of Jason Statham, which specifically addresses the physical qualities of his performance and persona, and through which I want to explore the idea of physical charisma.
Cassice Last

My First experience of St Andrews

When I arrived in St Andrews in early September I could not wait to begin my Masters in Film Studies. Having completed my Bachelors in English literature (albeit with heavy sprinklings of film classes throughout) I was excited to study just film for a whole year. I was also pretty curious of the town of St Andrews. I had lived in a big city my whole life, and with a year abroad living near Washington DC, I was anticipating a big change. For starters, living near the sea, and so getting to visit the seaside whenever, is so different from anywhere else I have previously lived.

In the first week I met with other people on the MLitt course, the PhD course, and my professors. I feel the time has gone by pretty quickly. I have visited many of the cafes and the parks and learnt to navigate the St Andrews roads on my bicycle. I am thoroughly enjoying my film course and presenting certain topics to my class. Settling in took a little bit of time but meeting with my professors to discuss papers and readings really helped.

Kathleen Fraese

5 Years and Counting

I began at St Andrews as a first year in 2010. Through my additional courses, I was able to include film studies, which I had never been exposed to in education. As my undergraduate persisted, so did my interest in the medium. I felt particularly encouraged thinking critically and writing creatively and the Film Studies department gave me the space and the support to delve into new territory with my writing again and again. The encouragement I felt drew me to the postgraduate program, and the transition has been as smooth and exciting as I imagined. Our professor-to-student ratio encourages deep and engaging examination. Our accessibility to materials and the department has been nearly immediate; and our pursuits are met with active concern and guidance. The postgraduate year is one that should both challenge and prepare. I have been given the opportunity to seek new questions alongside the professors whose works and minds I am truly inspired by. These questions will lead to my future in film, and it is one that I know will continue to be shaped in some way by the Film Studies department.
Nishtha Jain’s *Gulabi Gang* (2012) is a hard-hitting documentary about the work of Sampat Pal, an activist based in Uttar Pradesh, India. Nishtha’s documentary traces the activities of the “Gulabi Gang,” an organisation of pink sari clad women armed with bamboo sticks that fights for the cause of women victims of domestic abuse and against corruption in the system of governance in the region.

The “Gulabi Gang” has attracted recent attention from filmmakers like Kim Longinotto, who made the documentary *Pink Saris* in 2010, and Soumik Sen whose feature film *Gulab Gang* was released in 2014. What motivated you to make a documentary on the “Gulabi Gang”?

When I first met Sampat Pal there had been no documentary on her yet. A student from the National Institute of Design had done a short film project and there had been news stories by major news networks. Sampat was used to people coming and shooting around her activities but always in a typical “news byte” way. That is why when I first met her she asked me: “What should I show you?” I explained to her that I was not looking for stereotypical footage and asked her instead if I could spend time with her as she went about her day, which she agreed to. So for a few days we were with her from morning till night. During such a short period we talked a lot and had our arguments over issues such as feminism – in one occasion, she even threw me out and said she never wanted to see me again. However there were, of course, also fun times. It was precisely because we didn’t see eye to eye on everything that I became more and more excited about the film and seeing another viewpoint, whether I personally agreed with it or not.

Her views about feminism were very different from mine. As I spent time with Sampat, I realised that my views were based upon the very specific urban context I came from, which could not just be applied universally. In the cases Sampat was investigating there was always something more beneath the surface, which she was able to understand better than I. She indeed was very insightful and this became apparent to me as I observed the different cases she was asked to arbitrate.

I finally made the film in 2012, whereas the organisation had been active since 2006. Since its inception, “Gulabi Gang” has grown beyond the Banda district in Uttar Pradesh and now even has several cells abroad. What I wanted to track in my documentary was the
wide range of problems and the unpredictability of any given day in the life of Sampat Pal – the way she handled new cases every day, the number of unforeseen sub-plots in every story, and the journey of the identification in moving towards a resolution.

Which role did the presence of your own “invisible” shooting unit have on the different stages of Sampat Pal’s investigations portrayed in your documentary? Did it work also as a catalyst?

Situations were “mediated” obviously, but it’s not like everything was happening because the camera was there. I think there is such a culture of impunity in these places that no one is really scared of the camera or of being exposed. To give you an example, had there been a fear of the camera, the family you see in Sangrampur village would not have dressed up the crime scene so casually when it had already been recorded on camera the day before. Our presence did make a difference but in an indirect way. The day after we came upon the dead body of the young girl, we went back to the village because I wanted to go and talk with the people and probe their silence further. Sampat wasn’t keen to go back because of many reasons. For one, her position was a bit compromised because the family in question was related to hers and they were not forthcoming with her about what had really happened. Sampat refused to let me go alone as she felt it wasn’t safe so we went together the next day and, after seeing how the family members had dressed the crime scene, of course Sampat became even more determined to fight for the dead girl to get justice. So she did get deeply involved in the case, but I still cannot say whether she would not have taken it up had we not been there.

The public discourse on gender in India saw a radical change following the December 2012 protests against sexual violence against women. Could you reflect on audience reactions that you encountered during your various screenings in the backdrop of this public debate?
On the 16th of December 2012, the film received the Best Film MuhrAsia Documentary at the Dubai International Film Festival. On my return the next day, December 17, the newspapers were full of reports on the terrible gang rape in Delhi. That incident suddenly woke people up the world over to the question of gender violence and led to an increased interest in my film. The film was screened at over 30 film festivals in just 2013 and won several prestigious awards. We had a theatrical release in Norway, where approximately 9000 people saw the film. It was a great number given the size of the country and the “Indianness” of the content. The film opened the Dokfest-Muechen festival. The world was very keen to hear about the status of Indian women and they were impressed by the public outcry in India. During the theatrical release in Norway, and other international film festivals, many women’s organisations organised panel discussions on the subject of gender violence; the film was effectively used to start a dialogue which focussed not only on India but also on gender violence in western societies. Sadly, however, the film failed to make inroads in the Indian film festival scene. I had two small screenings in Delhi and Mumbai in 2012 and three in 2013 in Pune, Kerala and Dharamshala. It was DIFF, the film festival in Dharamshala, which finally brought the film to Indian media’s attention.

At the end of 2013, I managed to start talking with PVR Cinemas about a theatrical release. Meanwhile Recyclewala Labs came on board as the distributor for India. The film finally released in February 2014, two weeks before the Bollywood feature film named *Gulaab Gang*!

The fact that you were not able to show the film widely in India says a lot about the space for the documentary in India. Yet, recently, some documentaries have started getting multiplex release. Deepti Kakkar and Fahad Mustafa’s *Katiyabaaz*, which was released in 2014 comes to mind, among other films. What do you think about these changes?

2014 has been a great year for Indian documentaries. First it was *Fire in the Blood* by Dylan Mohan Gray followed by *Gulabi Gang*. When I applied for film certification to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in India, I was offered a “feature film” certificate. I opted for a “documentary” certificate because I wanted people to know that real life can also be shown in an engaging manner. *Gulabi Gang* was followed two weeks later by the mainstream feature *Gulaab Gang*, which the media referred to as the “battle of
the roses” (“gulab” in Hindi means rose). There was a lot of confusion and the already
distracted media kept on confusing the two films. The awards and acclaim my film had
already won, was attributed to the Bollywood film and what was most disheartening was
that people started calling the original Gulabi Gang by its Bollywood namesake Gulaab
Gang. There has been a growing interest in the documentary especially after it won the
two national awards in India, but even then media, including national television, showed
clips from the mainstream film and not from mine. It makes me sad to see that the Indian
media is totally in the grips of Bollywood.

Though the film had a multiplex release, many people actually saw the film in other
cultural spaces for free. This was due to documentaries’ limited theatrical release in India
or to the high price of tickets, a problem which many independent fiction films also face.
But it has mainly to do with a general apathy towards documentaries which are largely
perceived as boring, informational, educational and which are not seen to provide
“entertainment.” It is sad that the Indian film audience prefers to spend its money on
mainstream cinema rather than take their chances with the brave new independent
 cinema in India.

But despite all the confusion and the limitations, I’m still happy about the theatrical
release in India. We got reviews everywhere and my Facebook page was flooded with
laudatory messages from the audience. My film is now being screened widely in India. It
is also part of the ITVS outreach programme that reaches slums and rural areas in India.
The programme screens the film in its short version and is followed by an introduction
and a discussion. I am told it is the most popular film of the programme.
War cannot simply be described as a series of events happening “out there,” or as forming a brutal reality exceeding any form of representation. War, both as an individual and collective experience, is always closely connected to the body, and is thus mediated through the senses.

Taking place on the 12th and the 13th June 2014 at Friends House in London, the International Interdisciplinary Conference “Sensing War,” organised by the University of Portsmouth, sought to address and explore multiple and shifting relationships between war and sensation in bringing together scholars from various disciplines.

Panel titles included “Soldiering and Sensory Practice,” “Sensory experience and (post-)war landscapes,” and “Violence, Aesthetics and Late Modern Wars.” In their papers, about 60 contributors discussed a range of ongoing and past political conflicts in different regions, and their effects on warfare, art and social life in terms of sensorial experience. The keynote by Ryan Bishop (University of Southampton) and John Phillips (National University of Singapore), titled “Remote Sensing: Auto-Offensive Technologies,” focused on the relationship between communication technologies and the paradoxical situation of “sensing at distance,” while other presentations concentrated on the discourse of witnessing, dimensions of military camouflage, or emotional geopolitics.

Informed by different academic backgrounds, the talks also covered the sensory scope of various media forms, ranging from the intensiveness of Ernst Jünger’s photo books to aspects of interactivity and individuation of Internet-based warfare (“iWar”), or questions of pathos in war video games.

Representing the St Andrews Film Department, Professor Robert Burgoyne delivered a paper on “The Violated Body and Affect in Zero Dark Thirty” and participated in the concluding roundtable discussion alongside Dr Caroline Holmquist (Senior Lecturer in War Studies, Swedish National Defense College) and Dr Kevin McSorley (Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Portsmouth). I myself had the opportunity to present on “Cinema’s Corpographic Warfare,” where I talked about my research on First World War films staging space as a somatic experience.

From my own point of view, attending an interdisciplinary conference that did not specifically focus on film and media studies but nevertheless encompasses a variety of perspectives on my research topic has been thoroughly inspiring. The event has indeed fostered a both enlightening and enjoyable academic exchange, which I hope I will be able to further over the course of my project.
The humanities are doomed! Or so goes one common refrain in broader debates about the future of higher education. The most pessimistic critics point to cancelled humanities subjects at public and elite private American universities. Others cite the corporatisation of universities governed, increasingly, by demands from administrators, students, and their parents for transferrable skills, impact, and clear paths to employment. In the UK, such demands achieved heightened visibility in the latest REF exercise. But as the recent resignations of scholars like Marina Warner have demonstrated, we may be witnessing more of a tipping point than a truly novel state of affairs. A flourishing critical literature – including recent books such as William Deresiewicz’s *Excellent Sheep* (Free Press, 2014), Michael Roth’s *Beyond the University* (Yale, 2014), and Toby Miller’s *Blow Up the Humanities* (Temple, 2012) – have attempted to diagnose academia’s ills and, in some cases, outline solutions. Oxford University’s 2013 study, “Humanities Graduates and the British Economy: The Hidden Impact,” and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences 2013 report “The Heart of the Matter” have similarly attempted to outline both the problems and potentials of the traditional liberal arts education. Little would suggest that these debates are soon to end.

What might visual culture scholarship contribute to these debates? Does visual culture research offer models of scholarship that underscore the humanities’ central importance in humanistic inquiry? Does teaching visual culture offer antidotes to what critics have variously diagnosed as our “miseducated” and “adrift” students? In August, I organised a conference around this question at the University of Southern California’s Visual Studies Research Institute. With additional funding from the Social Science Research Council, the conference brought together a group of early career visual culture scholars from across humanities disciplines and beyond academia to address these questions and imagine an alternative, brighter future for the humanities with visual culture at its core. Drawn from an SSRC fellowship cohort of twelve PhD candidates organised in 2007 under the direction of Professors Vanessa Schwartz (USC) and Anne Higonnet (Barnard), the eight scholars who participated in this conference included six tenure track professors at UK, US, and Canadian universities, a curator from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and one adjunct/community college lecturer. The presentations offered a range of new visual culture research on topics including object exchange in early modern Islamic
courts, sixteenth-century pamphlet engravings, the decisions involved in archiving and exhibiting the work of Robert Mapplethorpe, contemporary Sino-US film relations, and (my own work about) the visual culture of the petroleum industry.

Each presenter was also tasked with articulating a vision for the future of visual culture research and the humanities. Those visions gave cause for optimism. Few would dispute that the questions asked by visual culture scholars – about how we see and know the world; about the structure of visual signs and systems; about the uses and ethics of visible evidence; and about the importance of visual and media literacy – rest at the heart of twenty-first-century society. One has only to think of the importance of film and photography in debates about chemical weapons in Syria or the images of polar ice caps used to raise public awareness about climate change to recognise the critical role that visual materials and visual analysis perform in contemporary public life. Such uses extend back in time and have evolved over millennia. Contextualising such visual practices is fundamental to analysing our world and acting in the present. And this is precisely what we do. In a world in which visual media structures so much of our daily experience, who else will teach the next generation of students to make sense of the images that inform, instruct, and entertain us at every turn? Who else will train the next generation of scholars to analyse, synthesise, and share the newly visualised data that have become so important to all academic disciplines and in the communication of knowledge more generally? The humanities are doomed!? Long live the humanities!
The one-day symposium “La mirada de Icíar Bollaín” started out with a description of a simple scene of a woman changing a nappy on a bench, completely overlooked by the city going past her. As Professor Núria Triana Toribio (University of Kent) described this scene from Icíar Bollaín’s *Mataharis* (2007), she noted her shock that in all her encounters with Spanish cinema’s “realismo social” she had never before witnessed such a moment displayed on film. The protagonist took advantage of this invisibility allowed by the mundane task of changing a nappy as it cloaked her in the invisibility she needed to carry out her work as a private eye. At the same time, it pointed out this very invisibility of the working woman who must complete all these overlooked tasks while earning an income and raising a family.

This scene is one of Icíar Bollaín’s miradas (gazes) of reality, especially a female reality that, like the character’s overlooked act of changing a nappy, so often goes overlooked. Throughout the symposium held on May 30 2014, hosted by Professor Bernard Bentley and the School of Modern Languages, an audience of academics, students, and locals got the chance to see many of Bollaín’s miradas in a diverse day of lectures, screenings, and questions and answers with the director, actress, screenwriter, and producer herself. Introductory remarks by Bentley were followed by Professor Triana Toribio’s talk on “realismo social” and Dr David Archibald’s (University of Glasgow) presentation on the representation of anti-fascist women in Spanish Civil War cinema, focusing specifically on Bollaín’s performance in Ken Loach’s *Land and Freedom* (1995). After a screening of *Even the Rain* (2010), Bollaín’s celebrated film depicting the continual issues of colonialism and contemporary struggles such as Bolivia’s water wars, the day ended with a lively discussion with Bollaín.

At the end of the day the audience was excited to question Bollaín further about her experiences. In response to questions about her politics, Bollaín did not categorise herself as a political filmmaker, but rather, as one who followed subjects that interested her and which inevitably seemed to lead to political topics that she explores from a female director’s perspective. As Bollaín described the state of women in the film industry, with its lack of female directors and protagonists, she passionately made a point for the inclusion of more women’s voices in film. If there were more visionary women’s voices like Bollaín’s not only would women benefit, but so would the film industry as a whole. The day might not have started off with the most glamorous of images, but then this wasn’t a day about the glamour of this talented, vibrant star; rather, it was about the insights and miradas that Bollaín offers beyond the shiny surfaces into something more profound and more stimulating.
Taking up jury service at two recent international film festivals allowed me to increase my awareness of the importance of participant observation. I gained new insights on at least two aspects that we are still to explore in depth: the party and the glamour.

The Party

“The two of you are unlike any other jury members I have dealt with in the past five years,” said Dana Yun, the VIP coordinator at Busan, whose specialism is to take care of jury members during this largest Asian event.

The remark was made in regard to Jacques Ranciere and myself, two academics that differed from her usual client line up, consisting of directors and actresses. Apparently, we were so unusual because all we wanted after the intense jury work concluded was to see some good movies. We would then pick only one party to attend, and even then would not stay for more than an hour.

Dana was more accustomed to dealing with jury members for whom doing the party circuit was the most important part of the festival experience. For them the night would just begin at the time it was winding up for us. Dana had in her possession a lengthy Excel table, listing all known parties taking place across this vast festival – a choice of about 7-8 every night over ten days – along with contact numbers for the coordinators, so that she could call and arrange for attendance at the event if we wanted to. The party programme, even if only privately available on this Excel print out, was as diverse and extensive as the public programme of screenings.

Festival wisdom at Busan has it that the most important things here happen in the twilight zone between 10 pm – when the party begins at clubs with names like Beach Bikini – and 5 am – when, at dawn, survivors of the night congregate at the Minami, the festival’s favourite izakaya place. Indeed, Kim Dong-ho, Busan’s legendary founder and current honorary president, is known to...
have consolidated the belief that being able to live through a series of all-nighters is the most important skill for a festival director.

In Morocco, likewise, opulent dinners staged at the lavish houses of local sponsors were starting at midnight and the most popular guests were those who would end up plunging in the pool on the rooftop of the hotel after 4 am.

At Busan, where red carpet abounds, it transpired that my jury-fellow-actress had requested and received a make-up overhaul in her room before the opening ceremony. I had been clueless of this aspect until then, but now it became clear that professional glamming up was a standard service offered to actresses that would walk on stage and in front of cameras during the festival’s public events.

I became motivated to try glamming up as well. Whilst not an actress, I was also appearing on stage, so I why not expect to look equally good? So I asked for a make-up service prior to the closing night. The response was that this is a particularly busy day, and all actresses had already booked the service in preparation for the closing. But if I wanted it badly, they could offer me the slot of 12 noon, some 5 hours prior to the event.

Trouble was that I was already scheduled to see a film at the same time Timbuktu by Abderrahmane Sissako. Thus, I was

The Glamour
I met celebrated Berber actress and natural beauty Saida Baaddi just prior to the opening night in Morocco. She was all magnificently made up and wore a shining white dress with rich embroidery. “You look fantastic, Saida…” I gasped – “Just wait till the closing night…” she smiled. And indeed, for the duration of the festival she changed fancy outfits every day and posed in innumerable photos for the endless fans that would accost her in front of the festival venue. She then appeared in sumptuous deep purple the final night. Her glamour was overpowering…
faced with the need to make a choice between film and glamour – between art and beauty.
I chose art. Hopefully, I will tend to the glamour side next time around.

*The Films*

Many colleagues have heard me state publicly that at many festivals the films are not the most important thing – and indeed, I more and more believe this to be the case. Hence I am inserting a brief commentary on some of the films that made an impression on me at the festivals as a “footnote” of sorts. I saw a total of about 50 films since September, about half of which were as part of my jury service.

From Busan, a festival showcasing over 350 films and employing a team of programmers, I would like to mention the trafficking drama *Haemoo*, directed by Sung Bo-shim and produced by my fellow-jury member and new friend Bong Joon-ho – this film is also South Korea’s official entry to the Oscars. Also, *The Tribe* by Miroslav Slaboshpitsky (Ukraine) – a remarkable metaphor of the post-communist condition and a film on which I am planning to write elsewhere.

At Sale, the programming was by Moroccan Hishem Falahi in consultation with Frenchman Philippe Jalladeau, the founder of Nantes’ remarkable festival “Trois Continents.” As the competition did not have to consist of premieres, there were some excellent titles, such as *Refugiado* by Argentinian Diego Lehrman and the Norwegian *I am Yours* by Iram Haq.

And, even if it scheduled at the easy-to-overlook slot of 9 am at the Polish Film festival in Gdynia, I truly liked the playfully sensual *Little Crashes*, a diploma work by Lodz Film School graduates Aleksandra Gowin, Ireneusz Grzyb. I am grateful to my friend Mirek Przylipiak for insisting we go to see it at this early hour and for pointing out the special dilapidated charm of the city of Lodz – an unexpected contextualisation that made me even more interested in this important cinematic place, knowing that the next NECS conference will be held there...
Last summer I had the pleasure to attend two exceptional cultural events in the Balkans: Divan Film Festival (26 – 31 August 2014) in Cetate, Romania and the Balkan Film and Food Festival (1 – 7 September 2014) in Pogradec, Albania. The ingenious idea of combining cinematic and culinary delights seems to be an ideal combination for the multi-faceted region, as Eno Milkani, the organiser of Balkan Film and Food Festival affirms: “We aim to have tasty film and cinematic food.”

The Divan Film Festival takes place on the banks of the river Danube at Cetate, close to where the borders of Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria meet, while the Balkan Film and Food Festival takes place in Pogradec by the lake Ohrid, near the Albanian-Macedonian border and on a historical trade route from Ottoman times. Various cultures have met over the course of centuries on these crossroads, and now both festivals bring together filmmakers, scholars, actors, producers and film enthusiasts from all corners of the Balkans. They meet here to watch both old and new films made in the region and beyond.

The uniqueness and bohemian vibe of the Divan Film Festival, now in its fifth year, dictates no competition nor awards. Instead, the festival revolves around a theme which allows the organisers to program retrospectives of old features alongside new shorts, documentaries and feature films, workshops and a symposium. This year, the symposium on “Heroes and Anti-heroes in the Balkans” was chaired by Prof. Dina Iordanova and attended by scholars from various Balkan countries and beyond; Nevena Daković, Lydia Papadimitrou, Electra Venaki, Dana Duma, Aleksandar Ianakiev, Abbie Saunders and Wang Yao. We talked about famous national heroes and anti-heroes (such as Alexis Zorbas, Hitar Petar, Pacala and Nastratin Hodgea), and discussed the construction and frameworks behind heroic images and popular imagination. One of the highlights of the festival was the screening of Un été inoubliable (An Unforgettable Summer, 1994) attended by director Lucian Pintilie and his wife Marie-France Ionesco.

The Balkan Film and Food Festival, now in its fourth year, ran for a week with
screenings of shorts, animation films, documentaries and feature films. The festival jury included Thomas Logoreci, the director of the recent Albanian film Bota (2014), and Eric Velthuis, an accomplished documentary filmmaker and producer from the Netherlands. Skandal (Albania, dir. Elton Baxhaku and Eriona Çami), the first feature documentary which dwells into the Albanian LGBT movement, was actually quite well-received, even if the audience in the small lake town of Pogradec remained tacit during the screening. Considering the mass protests and continuous repression of LGBT communities throughout the region, the award for Best Film was an important step in recognising the need to reinforce activist efforts. The film Thresholds (Croatia, dir. Dijana Mladenović), which was named Best Short, touches on the still sensitive topic of the Croatian government’s forceful evictions of unfit occupants (that is non-ethnic Croatians) during the Yugoslav Wars in the early 1990s. A Perfect Day for Bananafish (Serbia, dir. Stefan Malešević, which won The Best Staff Film, is based on the eponymous short story by Salinger, to transpose the uneasiness of being to present-day Serbia and the after-effects of the recent Kosovo conflict.

Both festivals fuse films, food, and the Balkan spirit for the duration of a week, making them unique and original experiences for any festival-goer and cinéphile. They allow for cross-cultural cooperation and break with the dominant media discourse that spreads discordance among Balkan nations while debunking the concept of Balkanism. These festivals render a picture of a Balkan people who share more similarities than differences – in cuisine, in humor and of course in their unique and exciting cinema.
Nowadays, no one is surprised when watching digital copies of old films. Museums, film archives and even filmmakers digitise films in order to facilitate access, and/or ensure preservation. However, the use of digital technologies for these purposes, especially for making film heritage available, is not so widespread. These were a few of the points I discussed in a presentation entitled “Past Footage, Present Challenges: Digitalising Uruguayan Film Heritage” at the XI MAGIS, International Film Studies Spring School, held in March 2013, in Gorizia (Italy). The session was chaired by Simone Venturini, coordinator of La Camera Ottica, the Laboratory of Film Restoration from the Università di Udine. He had previously met Julieta Keldjián, lecturer at Universidad Católica in Uruguay, with whom I had interacted for the writing of the paper. After this presentation, due to our common interests, Simone, Julieta and I had a few Skype meetings to coordinate a project for the professional digitisation (scanning at 2.3K and 12bit) of two short films made by independent filmmakers using Super 8mm film stock, at the time of the Uruguayan dictatorship (1973–85).

We knew which films we wanted from the very beginning. However, we needed to persuade those having these unique and fragile copies to hand them over and trust us. For us it was clear that taking the risk of sending these copies abroad to be digitised was worth it; for them it was not so straightforward. These films were made in extremely hard conditions and have an emotional value that only those who made them can fully understand. After months of discussions and meetings, our project was fully supported and we received the copies of both El honguito feliz (The Happy Mushroom, Cineco, 1976) and 1 de mayo de 1983 (Labour Day, Grupo Hacedor, 1983).

Both films were made by collectives of young amateur filmmakers convinced that cinema was a necessary tool for opposing the regime. 1 de mayo registered the first Labour day celebration after ten years in which gatherings to remember this iconic date for workers
had been forbidden. During those ten years, every 1 May was remembered with graffiti and flyers. However, the 1983 celebration was authorised and ended up being a massive act of resistance, which was extremely well attended and inaugurated a series of rallies against the dictatorship. Although during times of social conflict making documentaries has usually been an intuitive practice, the members of Cooperative Cineco also explored the production of animations which promoted values of solidarity and togetherness. \textit{El honguito} is one of those. We chose both films because we wanted to reflect the diversity of approaches to the same context and open up discussions about different ways of promoting resistance.

Digitising these films was the first step to encourage further exploration of this time in history. It is important to get closer to these productions to analyse how filmmakers generated an alternative cultural life and incorporated small-gauge cinema to resist one of the most brutal dictatorships of the Southern Cone. We could take this step thanks to the funds provided by our three universities: Università di Udine, Universidad Católica del Uruguay and the University of St Andrews. In the UK, copies of both films will be deposited in our library, thanks to the contribution from the Library Enhancement Fund.

I would like to take advantage of this piece to express my gratitude to Simone Venturini and Julieta Keldjián for their generosity and professionalism; and to thank the support of Leonardo Quaresima, Head of La Camera Ottica, and Mónica Arzuaga, Dean of the School of Human Sciences at Universidad Católica del Uruguay. I would also like to thank the members of Cineco: Dardo Bardier, Teresita Bardier, Wilfredo Camacho, Ana Suárez and Anabel Parodi, and Jorge Voituret from PIT-CNT, for making sure we would receive both films on time. Thanks also to those who believed in this project and contributed to make it happen: Mirco Santi and Gianandrea Sasso, for their work at the laboratory; Erica Carter and Bill Marshall for organising the AHRC Modern Languages and Film Spring School; Dina Iordanova, Joshua Yumibe, Tom Rice and Dennis Hanlon for their guidance to raise funds; Hilda McNae, Aileen Cook and Kim Bennett, for handling the library funds; and my supervisors David Martin-Jones and Gustavo San Román for supporting my participation in the Spring School.
Back in 1988, I travelled to Sai Ree beach in the Chumphon province of southern Thailand with my family. There is a shrine of Admiral Prince Abhakara Kiartivongse or Prince of Chumphon (1880-1923), a father of the Royal Thai Navy, located on the top of the hill. Thus, Chumphon, in my childhood memory evoked both the sacredness of the Prince and the monsoon I endured during my visit.

In 2010, I returned to Chumpon as a holidaymaker at Tung Wua Laen beach. The beach is a setting in the Thai novel, Our Land written during the “go farming” craze among Thai elites after the revolution in 1932.

I visited Chumphon once again in early August 2014, this time not as a tourist, but as an academic. The intention of my fieldwork was to tie remaining memories of the junior soldiers with the remediated memory created by the Thai film, Boys Will Be Boys, Boys Will Be Men (Euthana Mukdasanit, Thailand, 2000).

On 8th December 1941, the Japanese army invaded Thailand, mooring on the beaches of provinces in the southern regions of Thailand. In Chumphon, there was a battle between Thai and Japanese armed force at Tha Nang Sang Bridge before the Thai government’s declaration of surrender at noon. The heroism of young soldiers or Yuwachon Thaharn fighting against the Japanese subsequently became a core part of Chumphon’s local history.

I started collecting data from my friend’s mother. She was born after World War II but has memories of the junior soldiers through folklore as told by her family, neighbours and by her “mnemonic community.” She began her story by connecting herself to the physical spaces signposted as locations in which Japanese troops were found. These locations are situated near her home and the local market. We drove to the estuary where the Japanese ships once floated. My friend then met with some of her elderly relatives and proceeded to map out the sites of the battle and recollect some of the people involved. I then visited the Sriyaphai School, the training ground of the junior soldiers, where I met many of my friend’s former teachers. They gave me the cremation book of one of the ex-
junior soldiers. As suggested by the school librarian, I found some memoirs of the former school director - Sanan Chumvarathayee. Sanan was appointed as a junior soldier when he was studying his upper secondary level at the Sriyaphai School between 1939-1940.

During Sanan’s administration, he built a hall of fame for Sriyaphai’s alumni that included the junior soldiers. Sanan formed the Sriyaphai School as a mnemonic institution in which the heroism of the soldiers was retold for and by the students, most of which are native to Chumphon. Despite the imprecise stories of the young soldiers in textbooks written by the Ministry of Education, Chumphon people find their own way to memorialise Yuwachon Thaharn.

From Sriyaphai, the biggest school in the province, to the Ban Khor Son School, I found another striking but modest mnemonic institution. The memory of Yuwachon Thaharn has been blended into social studies courses taught at the school. The school has built a humble museum collecting iconography from World War II, e.g. swords of the Japanese soldiers found in Chumphon and old photographs. Ban Khor Son has its own memory of World War II in the school backyard (which is also a graveyard of anonymous soldiers). The beach at the back of the school is where the Japanese ships set ashore. In the museum, there are photographs of a Japanese professor and his students who came to visit in 2003. The memory is cherished in the form of the museum, the school curriculum and even mural paintings on the wall under the school’s motto: “Ban Khor Son - the land of history.”

Passing Ban Kor Son, the Japanese army advanced to Tha Nang Sang Bridge, the site of another almighty battle. 100 metres from the bridge, the monument of Yuwachon
Thaharn stretches skyward awaiting for the annual commemoration. Near the monument, there is a small pagoda containing a number of relics once belonging to Lt.Col.Thawin Niyomsen or Khru Thawin—the commander of young soldiers’ forces in Chumphon. He died in battle against the Japanese. Khru Thawin’s name and figure were also inscribed beneath the statue of Yuwachon Thaharn.

The small pagoda and the bridge lack adequate maintenance leading me to wonder how often the mnemonic institution touches upon this site. While memory of Yuwachon Thaharn continues to be revived in schools, other sites suggest a sense of social amnesia. However, I decided to look to another source of memory - a soldier.

Living as memory and living with memory, I interviewed Phichet Chareunpanit who claimed to be one of two last remaining Yuwachon Thaharn in Chumphon. Observing his connections to the sites of memory I have learnt a lot about commemorative rituals and gathering of the veterans. Interestingly, the film based on the story of Yuwachon Thaharn was screened at one of monthly meetings of the former junior soldiers. The film has become a key source of education in spite of Phichet’s objection about the film’s fidelity to the facts.

Negotiating the memory of Yuwachon Thaharn is still an ongoing progress and the Sriyaphai School library plans to continue collecting writing on the subject. All interviewees I questioned were aware of both the visibility and invisibility of memorial sites. Some mentioned the temporary Japanese cemetery beneath the school’s playing field and others went further to suggest that traces of it still remain. To me, the weaving of war memory into everyday life is comparable to digging into the sand on the beach or even in their own backyards. There could be skeletons buried somewhere. They are waiting to be discovered in order to further the narrative of Yuwachon Thaharn.
I knew from before I even started working on my PhD thesis that archival research would have to play a crucial part in my endeavour. This may seem obvious, since elaborating a history of sex and sexuality in Romanian cinema in relation to state institutions and social attitudes would require a close look at the insufficiently explored documents of the former Communist Party. What I didn’t expect was just how fascinating my findings would be. Among many other collections, The National Archives of Romania in Bucharest hold the impressive Fund of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania. Two of this fund’s sections, Chancellery and, respectively, Propaganda and Agitation, were the ones I studied on my first research trip, undertaken in June 2014 and made possible by generous funding from the Department of Film Studies at the University of St Andrews. The two sections of the fund comprise a wide range of relevant documents, such as transcripts of meetings between party leaders and artists, lists of films commissioned (and greenlit) by the Council for Socialist Culture and Education (CSCE, the main cultural censorship institution until 1989), yearly “thematic plans” for the Romanian film production, and many more.

It was extremely interesting to see how specific the criticisms raised by the Party’s ideological leaders could be in relation to filmmaking. One of the most relevant examples I encountered was that of *Scrisori tandre/Tender Letters*, a never-produced screenplay by Romanian auteur Mircea Daneliuc, perhaps better known to Western audiences for subversively anti-Communist films such as *Croaziera/The Cruise* (Mircea Daneliuc, Romania, 1981), or, after the fall of Communism, *Patul conjugal/The Conjugal Bed* (Mircea Daneliuc, Romania, 1993). Through letters between Daneliuc and various members of CSCE, one can witness the dramatic story of how political paranoia and uniformity denied the right to intimate life for characters in 1980s Romanian films.

The Central University Library of Bucharest provided me with some useful resources on the pre-socialist period of Romanian cinema. A string of very rare books and booklets that reflected on the role of films in the Romanian society of both World War I and the inter-war period proved to be invaluable in rethinking and restructuring the first chapter of my thesis. In the second half of my trip I resumed a different part of my research, which I started the year before, on the *Cinema* magazine archive (the country’s official film publication during Communism), which I was able to access through the “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library in Cluj-Napoca. Paralleling my research in Bucharest, it was interesting to see how much more ideologically controlled *Cinema* became in the 1970s compared to the ‘60s, and how frighteningly skewed film criticism ended up being, mirroring the repression and inauthenticity characterising Romanian films of that period.
The first silent film I watched with live accompaniment was *The Navigator* with Buster Keaton in 2010 at the Cinemateket in Stockholm. It astonishingly caught me by surprise. Around the very same time I started studying film, I became increasingly fascinated with the many ways cinema and audiences have changed over time, and, even more so, by the challenge of preserving such richness for future generations. Coming from a small town in the south of Italy, far from archival institutions, I was mesmerised by this new world of cinémathèques, film vaults, and unexpected findings. Watching a restoration of Mauritz Stiller’s *Brother Against Brother*, dug up from the basement of a church in Prague in 2009, evoked for me the same epic imagery of a great archaeological discovery. I also learned that there are only few places in the world where nitrate films are still publicly shown and, among these, an institution in particular has risen to international prominence for its advocacy of film preservation against obsolescence – that place is George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, NY.

When I received the Russell Trust Award to travel to Rochester and carry on my research at GEH over the summer a dream literally came true. I was expecting to visit the “temple” of photography, the “Mecca” of film preservation, the “Eldorado” of cinéphiles but my anticipations were only to be outperformed by what revealed to be a new, unprecedented encounter with the dense history of cinema. The tour of Eastman’s Colonial Revival mansion – from which the museum begun taking shape already in 1948 – on the very first day of my visit, set the stage for what followed in the next two months. The magnificence of the gardens, the pomp of the interiors, the host of exotic souvenirs on display – an elephant’s head in the conservatory, cheetah fur throws all around, and a variety of cases modelled out of wild animals hoofs (!) – all spoke of an astute entrepreneur’s fortune: the film strip patent. However, all that splendour, that once was of the “Silicon Valley” of the nineteenth century, progressively faded away as I approached downtown on the very same afternoon, and it left room to the “post-atomic” scenario of Rochester in the “digital age.” Only there, in the midst of the city’s scars, was I able to grasp the consequences of Kodak’s inexorable decline, the dismantlement of photographic film production, and the rapid obsolescence of the medium.

My research in the Museum’s Stills Vaults began only few days before the Hollywood
Studios and Kodak signed an agreement to keep a minimum of film stock production alive. The deal was reached thanks to the pressures of celebrity directors Quentin Tarantino, Christopher Nolan, Judd Apatow, and J.J. Abrams; to the commitment to film preservation of masters like Martin Scorsese; and last but not least to the perseverance and the often “invisible” work of institutions like GEH. The Museum’s priority today is to preserve the “cinematic experience” or, as senior curator Paolo Cherchi Usai puts it, the uniqueness of the “film event,” while being as faithful as possible to the medium’s original appearance on screen. During my interview with the curator, he highlighted that GEH is modelled on the “fine art museum” framework, and its “main gallery is the Dryden Theatre.” The question that guided my research, therefore, was: how has the institution’s approach to the medium changed since its foundation, when curator Beaumont Newhall had to strenuously defend photography’s artistic value before the board of trustees?

Little by little the documents I was looking for started emerging, thanks to the supervision and the precious “revelations” of all staff members, whom I wish to thank here for all their invaluable help. Not only was I able to dig up the “Dryden Theatre Motion Picture Lecture Series” and the accompanying programme notes, I also found Newhall’s introduction to Nana, the very first film screened here in 1951. Every little document I came across, ranging from subscribers invitations to beautifully designed retrospective booklets, conveyed a sense of deep love for cinema and a struggle against collective amnesia to keep alive the memory of an art of a different kind – the art of silent cinema. I discovered that James Card, the first film curator at GEH, started organising the Festival of Film Artists in January 1955, shortly after Clyde Bruckman, the scriptwriter of the very same film that had allured me to the wonders of silent cinema, killed himself due to his professional decline. The event brought on the stage of the Dryden Theatre film history’s protagonists, such as Richard Barthelmess, Lillian Gish, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Mae Marsh, and Mary Pickford. Card introduced the Hollywood edition of the festival a few months later declaring: “Glittering, colorful, splendid, imposing, expensive though they may be, today’s films have never yet achieved the record of the millions of faithful watchers who weekly saw the silents. No use talking about competition from television, for there was no television competing at all for the first 17 years of sound films.” What I seemed to discover in many of Card’s papers, or in the glossy catalogue of the exhibition of publicity portraits “Faces and Fabrics. Feathers and Furs,” was a declaration of
(nostalgic) love and a passionate commitment to preserve what had made the history of cinema. Faithfulness to the historical specificity of the medium, attention to detail, and expert showmanship survive in every single aspect of the Museum’s work nowadays, when film’s existence is threatened by obsolescence.

Rochester does not offer much of a nightlife, especially if you do not have a car, so I (happily) ended up spending most of my nights at the Dryden, where I made some of the most memorable film “discoveries” in my life. I remember going to the Dryden on a rainy Saturday night to watch the restoration of Cousin Jules (Dominique Benicheti, 1972). As usual, after the introduction, I waited for the lights to dim and the curtain to rise, then the black lateral wings slowly opened and revealed the widths of cinemascope. Such was the sense of anticipation engendered by the slowness of that preliminary ritual, that I couldn’t help but feel implicated for the rest of the film in such a wide view, in-between the overlapping horizons of the French countryside. Some weekends afterwards, I went and watched a 35mm print of Hitchcock’s notorious masterpiece The Birds. I have to confess that, no matter how hard I tried, I had never understood those that like my mum find the film terrifying – until I watched (and heard) it at the Dryden. The electronic soundtrack of the birds’ call, considerably amplified, made it an unexpectedly haunting and physically disturbing experience – I left the theatre that day with the feeling I had seen a dramatically different film from the DVD I had at home. Lastly, I watched a nitrate print of Hitchcock’s Rebecca – in the end, nitrate film exhibition was the primary reason why I was in Rochester. I had waited for this moment for so long that when it came, I approached it with a mixed feeling of anticipation and disillusionment, as I kept repeating myself that all that hype was probably due only to the “aura” of nitrate film. In retrospect, I can describe only through metaphors how breathless it left me – it was as finely gleaming as porcelain, as crisp as 4K, yet with a volume that is unknown to digital images. As Paolo Cherchi Usai stated while launching the upcoming Nitrate Picture Show: “Watching a nitrate print projected on the big screen is a rare privilege.”

While exploring the way GEH has kept writing and re-writing the history of the medium through curatorship, I discovered a different way of experiencing cinema, and a renewed love. Once again, I was astonishingly caught by surprise.
Robert Burgoyne

Lucy Fife Donaldson
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- Interviews:

Brian Jacobson


Natthanai Prasannam
Kathleen Scott

Leshu Torchin
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Ana Grgic

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Phil Mann

**Diana Popa**


**Natthanai Prasannam**


“Reminiscence, Boyhood, and Bayonet: Boys Will Be Boys, Boys Will Be Men (2000) as A Thai Memory Film.” Film Archive 4th Thai Film Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, September 2014.


**Tom Rice**

“Children of the Empire.” Children and non-theatrical media, University of Glasgow, 11 April 2014.

**Eileen Rositzka**


Amber Shields
“Fairytales of our Past: Explorations of the Trauma Process in Film.” The NECS Conference: Creative Energies, Creative Industries, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy, June 2014.

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Joshua Yumibe
“From Chromo-Pharmakon to the Glass Architecture, and Absolute Film.” Critical M.A.S.S., Michigan Alliance for Screen Studies, Michigan State University, Ann Arbor, MI, April, 2014.

- Conference Organised:


Rohan Crickmar took part in the Panel Discussion after the screening of Walerian Borowczyk's restored Dzieje grzechu, 39th Gdynia Film Festival, Gdynia, 16 September 2014.

Lucy Fife Donaldson gave a talk titled “The Strong and Silent Type?: Reading Against the Grain of Jason Statham’s Star Persona” for a research seminar series at the University of Reading, May 2014.

Richard Dyer was the keynote speaker for the BAFTSS Conference at University of London, 24 and 26 April 2014, presenting “The Persistence of Textual Analysis.” At the same conference he also hosted a screening of his film Desert Island Movie.

Jean-Michel Frodon partook in two public discussions, the first with Bruno Dumont about his work, which took place at the Festival de La Rochelle on 1 July 2014; the second with Agnes Varda, which took place at Locarno Film Festival on 11 August 2014. He also taught Master Classes on the following topics: “French Contemporary Cinema” (Invited by Prof R. Peña) at the Columbia University in Paris, 7 August 2014; “Film Criticism” at the Sarajevo Film Festival, 17 August 2014; “French Cinema History” at La Femis, 20 August; “Film Criticism” at Paris VII University, 26 November 2014; and “Digital Changes in Cinema” at Paris I University, 3 December 2014. Jean-Michel gave a conference about the making of the film Bridges of Sarajevo at the Sarajevo Film Festival, 18 August 2014 and was keynote speaker at the annual convention “Enfants de cinéma,” 10 October. He also gave a variety of talks entitled: “Serge Daney and His Criticism Heritage” at the Rencontres Cinématographiques de Bejaia, 12 September 2014; “The films of my Life” at Mostra de Sao Paulo, 25 October 2014; “How to tell the (hi)story of cinema” at Ciné-reflet in Paris, 1 November 2014; and “Are there temporally or geographically-limited differences in the artistic treatment of the First World War? Is there any common use of symbols, materials or images? What is the societal or political

Ana Grgic gave two seminars, the first entitled “Early cinema in the Balkans” at the Pogradec Balkan Film and Food Festival, in September 2014, and “Where East met West: Early cinema in the Balkans” for the Graz Centre for Southeast European Studies at the Karl Franzens University, 28 October 2014. She also gave a talk entitled “Heroes of the ordinary and the everyday in the Balkans” for the Divan Cetate Film Festival Symposium “Balkan Heroes and Anti-Heroes” in Romania, August 2014.

Dina Iordanova was a conference chair for the Symposium “Balkan Heroes and Anti-Heroes” at Divan Cetate Film Festival in Romania, August 2014. She was the keynote speaker at “Crisis in Film and Visual Media” Conference at the University of Vilnius in Lithuania, September 2014, presenting “The Oldies: Representations of Old Age in Postcommunist Cinema.” Dina was a part of two jury services, the first at the 8th Women’s Film Festival in Sale, Morocco, September 2014, and “New Currents” at the 19th Busan International Film Festival, South Korea, October 2014. She was keynote speaker for the Conference “How I celebrated the End of the World. 1989 in Central and Eastern European Cinema” at Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany, 23 October 2014, presenting “Breaking Through Walls and Discourses: History for Losers.” She also gave a variety of talks entitled: “The Film Festival as Inherently Transnational Space” for the Transnationalism and Cinema conference at NYU Abu Dhabi, 10-14 May 2014; “Stakeholder Configurations and Film Festivals: China in the Diaspora” for the Centre for Film Studies at the University of St Andrews, 14 October 2014; “Digital Disruption: Documentary Moves Online” for the International Documentary Festival Jihlava in the Czech Republic, 26 October 2014; and “Documentary Discourses: Cinema Moves Online,” for the Industry Forum, International Documentary Festival Jihlava in the Czech Republic, 27 October 2014.

Tom Rice gave a talk entitled “The Future of the Past: Moving Colonial Images Online” at the University of Stirling, 22 October 2014. He also curated a screening and talk entitled “Exhibiting Africa: Revisiting Colonial Exhibitions through film” for the “Mosaic Rooms” at Goethe Institute in London, 4 November 2014.


**PhD Viva Successes**

On behalf of all at the Department of Film Studies we would like to congratulate Kathleen Scott, Raluca Iacob and Beatriz Tadeo Fuica on their recent Viva successes.


Raluca’s thesis, *Projecting Peripheries: Allegories of Marginality in Post-Communist Romanian Cinema*, examines the ways in which the structure and history of post-communist Romania has influenced its urban identities, especially as they are reflected in contemporary Romanian films, and the effect that Romanian films have on the construction of Romanian identity, both nationally and in an international setting.

Finally, Beatriz’s thesis, *In Search of Images: Uruguayan Cinema 1960-2010*, considers the extent to which amateur, institutional, educational, documentary, and animation film made in diverse formats and film gauges can be included in discussions of Uruguayan national cinema. The department is very proud of Kathleen, Raluca and Beatriz’s accomplishments and wishes them every success in the future.
14 October 2014: Dina Iordanova “China in the Diaspora”
In this talk, Dina Iordanova explored how the film festival circuit facilitates the rise of corrective Chinese themes into the public sphere. The proliferating festivals and festival showcases – mainstream and alternative, diasporic and domestic, officially sanctioned and underground ones – channel the emergence of multiple narratives that all, in spite constant speculation of an imminent “hard landing” smooth into an overarching story of China’s emerging dominance.

21 October 2014: Geoffrey Nowell-Smith “What is film culture, and what, if anything does the government have to do with it?”
Geoffrey Nowell-Smith began his talk discussing the history of the BFI in detail, from its modest beginnings and turbulent early years to earning the reputation of the government’s “lead body” for film. He then introduced the idea of “film culture” in relation to the origins of BFI and queried if “film culture” is the most appropriate term to best understand the interaction between film and the populace.

4 November 2014: Maryam Ghorbankarimi: “Women Behind the Camera; An Institutional History of Iranian Cinema”
This paper explores the development of different independent institutions alongside the mainstream cinema which have aided in the revival of Iranian cinema and the increase in the number of female directors after the revolution. It briefly looks at the institution of Iranian cinema since the 1960s and sheds light on some significant developments alongside mainstream cinema, which (to my surprise) have made very little appearance in the scholarly discussions on Iranian cinema, although their significance is obvious to people involved in the industry.

11 November 2014: Screening of Gulabi Gang with Q&A with director Nishta Jain
Gulabi Gang (2012) is a film about a group of rural women who fight for the rights of women and Dalits. The screening, co-hosted by Centre for Film Studies, International Relations, and St Andrews Fem Soc, was followed by a discussion with filmmaker Nishtha Jain.
18 November 2014: Dr Alisa Lebow “The Unwar Film”
Alisa Lebow discussed how the prominent war documentary since Vietnam has existed as an anti-war documentary that, despite its message, still uses a military language. She then discussed how these two forms exist side by side and how they have spawned two new kinds of documentaries: the “para-militarist” documentary and the “unwar” documentary.

Awards

Michael Cowan, who will join the Department of Film Studies as a Reader in January, has just won a prize for his book on Walter Ruttmann. The Willy Haas Prize is awarded each year by a German film festival, Cinefest - Internationales Festival des deutschen Film-Erbes to an influential publication on German cinema. Dr Cowan’s book, Walter Ruttmann and the Cinema of Multiplicity, was published by Amsterdam University Press in 2014.

Richard Dyer was awarded the BAFTSS 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award last April in London during the BAFTSS Conference, which dedicated most of its panels to the analysis of different aspects of his work.

Grazia Ingravalle received the Russell Trust Award in the Spring of 2014 to carry on archival research at George Eastman House - International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, NY over the summer 2014.
Editorial Team
Grazia Ingravalle, Phil Mann, Shorna Pal, Cassice Last, Kathleen Fraese

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